

OUTSIDE SYSTEM

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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ACTION
May 9, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM:

Phil Odeen *PO*

SUBJECT:

Assessing the Impact of the Blockade

I foresee some very difficult decisions facing the President in two to four months regarding the effectiveness of the blockade. There is a good chance that at that point there will be considerable ambiguity over the real impact it is having on the NVN logistics posture.

-- Some will argue that it is not working and new policies should be pursued.

-- Others will claim it is working and if we just hang on a bit longer the impact will be apparent.

There will be a mass of intelligence reports related to the blockade. But they will almost certainly be conflicting. Sufficient information will be available to support almost any conclusion.

For this reason I believe we should develop an independent analysis of the effectiveness of the blockade. It is unlikely to produce a clear and definitive answer. But it should give us a feel for the range of likely impacts and help us frame questions to probe the proponents of various views.

In order to analyze the impact, three types of information are needed.

- (1) Approximations of the stocks available in North Vietnam and its supply areas in Laos and SVN.

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- (2) Consumption of supplies, to include materiel destroyed by air and naval activity.
- (3) The materiel being supplied to NVN despite the blockade, bombing, etc., as well as the amounts produced within NVN and captured in the South.

There is no ready source of the above data. Yet, I believe reasonable estimates can be made and useful analysis carried out. Where there is considerable uncertainty, parametric estimates can be developed and at least we can say "if you believe...then we conclude that...."

Such an analysis cannot be done in-house, as we will need considerable data from the Joint Staff, DIA and CIA. Therefore, the best way to proceed would be to assemble a small group from these agencies (plus OSD as Laird will insist) to develop the details of the analysis and data needs. The group could be an offshoot of the VSSG or completely ad hoc.

If you believe this approach would be useful, I can outline the study in more detail for you or Al to review.

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Prepare detailed study plan.

Discuss with me.

Drop idea.

cc: Dick Kennedy
 John Negroponte

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*Phil
 HAK says that can
 only be done w/ greatest
 security so as to insure
 no leaks. Al.*